

wise, he said, would be to separate himself from his alliance with Austria, and to throw her into the arms of Russia. But with regard to the Polish-Russian provinces, Napoleon declared he would see what he could do, should Providence favor the good cause. These vague and obscure expressions did not define what he intended to do for the Poles in the event of success crowning his vast enterprises. They excited the distrust of the Poles, and had no other result. On this subject, however, an observation occurs which is of some force as an apology for Napoleon. Poland was successively divided between three powers, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, with each of which Napoleon had been at war, but never with all three at once. He had therefore never been able to take advantage of his victories to re-establish Poland without injuring the interests of neutral powers or of his allies. Hence it may be concluded not only that he never had the positive will which would have triumphed over all obstacles, but also that there never was a possibility of realizing those dreams and projects of revenge in which he had indulged on the banks of the Nile, as it were to console the departed spirit of Sulkowski.

Bonaparte's character presents many unaccountable incongruities. Although the most positive man that perhaps ever existed, yet there never was one who more readily yielded to the charm of illusion. In many circumstances the wish and the reality were* to him one and the same thing. He never indulged in greater illusions than at the beginning of the campaign of Moscow. Even before the approach of the disasters which accompanied the most fatal retreat recorded in history, all sensible persons concurred in the opinion that the Emperor ought to have passed the winter of 1812-13 in Poland, and have resumed his vast enterprises in the spring. But his natural impatience impelled him forward as it were unconsciously, and he seemed to be under the influence of an invisible demon stronger than even his own strong will. This demon was ambition. He who knew so well the value of time, never sufficiently understood its power, and how much is sometimes gained by delay. Yet Caesar's *Commentaries*, which were his favorite study, ought to have shown, him that Caesar